



Week of Jan. 14 – Jan. 20, 2009

Military participation in the 56th Presidential Inauguration

Last November, Americans made history by electing the first African American to the highest office in the country: President of the United States. On Jan. 20, the military will honor our new Commander in Chief, President-elect Barack Obama. More than 5,000 servicemembers will march in formations, military bands and color guards, and serve in salute batteries and honor cordons, for the 56th presidential inaugural parade and swearing-in ceremony.

The Armed Forces Inaugural Committee, made up of 750 joint military members, has been hard at work behind the scenes since April 2008. The committee forms up every four years to coordinate ceremonial support for the inauguration. Here are some interesting facts about military involvement in presidential inaugurations:

- The U.S. military has participated in the presidential inauguration since April 30, 1789, when Army soldiers and Revolutionary War veterans escorted President George Washington to his ceremony in New York City.
- AFIC was established in the early 1950s. The first inauguration AFIC supported was President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953. The parade lasted five hours and remains the longest inauguration parade to date.
- Nearly 9,000 military participated in President Eisenhower's parade, and more than 15,000 took part in President John. F. Kennedy's in 1961.
- Only two inaugural parades have ever been cancelled: In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's fourth inaugural parade was cancelled due to wartime expenses, and in 1985, President Ronald Reagan's second parade was cancelled due to weather.

For more information about the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee, visit <http://www.afic.northcom.mil>. For more information about Inaugural events, visit <http://inauguration.dc.gov/index.asp>.

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

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